

5 FAM 330

DIPLOMATIC POUCHES

(TL:IM-35: 12-05-2002)
(Office of Origin: A/LM/PMP/DPM)

5 FAM 331 GENERAL POLICY

(TL:IM-35: 12-05-2002)

a. Diplomatic pouches transport official communications, documents, and articles of the U.S. Government across international frontiers.

b. Only individuals and organizations specifically authorized to use the pouch may do so (see 5 FAM 343).

c. All mail must show a complete return address. Mail without a valid return address will not be accepted.

d. The Department and each post must appoint a pouch control officer (PCO). If the PCO has reason to believe that the material may not qualify for pouch service, the PCO is authorized to open and inspect, in the presence of the originator, all items submitted for pouch dispatch. Originators who refuse to allow inspection may not dispatch them by diplomatic pouch. ***The PCO is also responsible for ensuring that mail for departing employees is forwarded according to guidelines listed in 5 FAH-10 H-523.***

e. Only authorized U.S. citizen employees of the U.S. Government can open, close, or inspect classified pouches. This must be done only in the classified pouch facility at posts.

f. Unclassified pouches may be opened, closed, or inspected only in the unclassified pouch room by authorized personnel assigned to the mailroom by post authorities (see 5 FAH-10 for more details). A cleared American does not need to be present during the opening of UNCLASSIFIED pouches that do not require special handling. It is highly recommended that an authorized U.S. citizen is in the Mail/Pouch room when a pouch shipment arrives to verify that pouches are received in good condition.

g. Specific pouch contents may not be discussed with or disclosed to any unauthorized person—U.S. citizen or foreign national.

h. Communications that discuss pouch contents must be marked at least "Sensitive". Depending on the specific information provided pertinent to the item(s) discussed, it may be marked CONFIDENTIAL or higher.

i. Pouches can be transported by commercial airlines including chartered flights, U.S. Government aircraft, and special support flights.

j. Special handling of mail sent via Diplomatic Pouch is not allowed. Individuals who need items urgently should use private express service carriers such as DHL and Federal Express. Using the pouch address for express service mail will cause the item to be delayed.

k. Do not use the diplomatic pouch to ship household items to circumvent the weight of unaccompanied air-freight. This is a serious abuse of pouch privileges and is subject to punitive action requiring the sender to reimburse the government for transportation costs. See 5 FAM 342 c for more information.

l. Other agency oversized unclassified items may be sent via the unclassified pouch at the expense of the originating agency under the following conditions:

(1) The originator must deliver the materials to the DPM facility, (SA-32), 44132 Mercure Circle, Sterling, VA 22170. It is located off RT. 606, approximately 3 1/2 miles west from RT. 28.

(2) A U.S. Government Bill of Lading (GBL) is used for the agency to reimburse the Department for transporting the material from Washington to overseas posts.

(3) Prohibited items will not be accepted.

m. Suspected pouch abuse may be reported anonymously, if necessary, to the Office of the Inspector General. ***The OIG Hotline number is (202) 647-3320. A suspected problem may be reported to the OIG Hotline via email to oighotline@state.gov. Please be aware, however, that the OIG cannot ensure confidentiality over the Internet/Intranet. The OIG intranet website is <http://oigweb.state.gov>. The OIG internet website is <http://oig.state.gov>. If there are concerns about confidentiality, please write to:***

***Office of Inspector General
Hotline
P.O. Box 9778
Arlington, VA, 22219***

5 FAM 332 POUCH INVOICES

(TL:IM-24; 01-30-1998)

a. Every diplomatic pouch dispatched must contain a Pouch Invoice, Form OF-244, listing the registered items in the pouch. This invoice must be placed on top of all other items, not inside an envelope.

b. Exceptions may be made only with prior approval of the Department (A/IM/RM/DPM).

5 FAM 333 POUCH ADDRESS

(TL:IM-24; 01-30-1998)

All containers used as diplomatic pouches must show the Department or one of its overseas posts or the Secretary of State as addresser and addressee on the pouch tag even if its entire contents are for another agency. See 5 FAH-10 for more details.

5 FAM 334 POUCH CONTENTS

(TL:IM-24; 01-30-1998)

Pouches may not contain items that are illegal to import into or export from the country of destination or are harmful to human life or the environment. An attempt to transmit a prohibited item may result in loss of pouch privileges and disciplinary action. See 5 FAH-10 for prohibited items.

5 FAM 335 FUNDING FOR DIPLOMATIC POUCHES

(TL:IM-24; 01-30-1998)

a. Originating posts fund pouch transportation.

b. Other agencies must reimburse the Department for the cost of processing and transporting their material through the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) agreement. Large bulk shipments are paid for directly by the other agencies providing fiscal data.

5 FAM 336 THROUGH 339 UNASSIGNED